



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

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State Requests FEMA Team to Assess Flood Damage

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – The State of Utah Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security has requested a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assess damages to public infrastructure during the recent flooding in Washington County that began on December 20, 2010. The PDA team will begin their assessment in Washington County on Wednesday, January 12, 2011.

"The preliminary damage assessment will provide the State with the necessary documentation to determine if a major disaster declaration is an appropriate request," said Colonel Keith Squires, Dept. of Public Safety Deputy Commissioner and Homeland Security Director. "We appreciate FEMA's quick response in helping us move forward in the recovery process."

The PDA is an information gathering process used to determine the magnitude and impact of an event's damage. A Federal/State team will visit local applicants in Washington County to view their public infrastructure damage firsthand, assess the scope of damage and estimate repair costs. The State uses the results of the PDA to determine if the situation is beyond the combined capabilities of the State and local resources and to verify the need and eligibility for supplemental Federal assistance from FEMA. The PDA also identifies any unmet needs that may require immediate attention.

If the damage is beyond the State and local government's recovery capability and the State meets eligible damage thresholds determined by FEMA, the governor may send a presidential disaster request letter to the President, directed through FEMA's Regional Administrator in Denver, Colorado. The President then makes the decision whether or not to declare a major disaster or emergency. If a presidential declaration is granted, FEMA will designate the area eligible for assistance and announce more details about the assistance available.

The Department of Public Safety and FEMA sent representatives to Washington County during the flooding to closely monitor the situation and provide support to the local government's incident response. At the State's request, a regional FEMA incident management team also responded to Washington County as a precautionary measure.

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